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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER KIM
HYUNG-O

Classified By: AMB Stephens. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: In an October 10 meeting with National Assembly Speaker Kim Hyung-o, the Ambassador and the Speaker discussed the current state of North Korean affairs and the support of both governments for a denuclearized North Korea. Turning to the KORUS FTA, which the government submitted to the National Assembly two days earlier, Kim emphasized the importance of the FTA for the continued development of Korea and for U.S.-Korea relations, although no indication was given as to the timing of a ratification vote. End Summary.

North Korea

12. (C) Ambassador Stephens paid an introductory call on National Assembly Speaker Kim Hyung-o on October 10. In welcoming her, Kim said that, "the Korean people would fully support her in carrying out her responsibilities as Ambassador." He went on to say that the Ambassador had arrived at a critical moment and that he hoped that a resolution to the North Korea issue could be found during her tenure. The Ambassador said that both nations needed to address how they were going to bring about a lasting peace on the Peninsula. She emphasized the need for closer bilateral relations to pave the way for a denuclearized North Korea and for allowing the North Korean people to enjoy the same opportunities and freedoms that South Koreans enjoy today. Kim added that he was appalled by the human rights conditions in North Korea and said that they were living in worse conditions than South Koreans were in the 1950s and 1960s.

U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement

13. (C) Turning to the KORUS FTA, Kim noted that the agreement had been submitted to the National Assembly two days earlier. He said that the FTA was necessary for the continued development of Korea and was also vital in strengthening the overall relations with the United States. To that end, Kim said that he was working to obtain the votes necessary to ratify the FTA in the National Assembly, although he did not offer his views on when a ratification vote might be scheduled. The Ambassador thanked the Speaker for his efforts and said that more work needed to be done to let the public in the ROK and the U.S. know the benefits of the FTA. She had spoken with many members of Congress and their staffers before her departure, and noted that the KORUS

FTA enjoyed broad but often quiet support. Kim also stressed the importance of "parliamentary diplomacy" in assuring the ratification of the FTA and suggested that he may travel to the U.S. next year. He added that he had concerns about some comments being made about the FTA on the presidential campaign trail and said that Korea would be disappointed if the U.S. requested a re-negotiation of the agreement. The Ambassador noted that the United States played a leadership role in global trade policy and that she did not expect that to change.

Electronic Democracy

14. (C) The Ambassador noted that the Speaker had a Ph.D. in Electronic Democracy and inquired as to its meaning and significance. Kim responded that although the term was no longer utilized, he wrote his dissertation on whether or not the spread of the internet -- and the subsequent dissemination of information -- would bring about direct democracy and render representational democracy obsolete. He concluded that even with electronic democracy, societies could not get away from representational democracy because the government, by its very definition, was designed to be a representation of the will of the people.
STANTON